

4 Jn 1860

PASTORAL LETTER

OF HIS LORDSHIP THE BISHOP OF KINGSTON ON THE TRIBUTE TO HIS HOLINESS.

Edward John, by the Grace of God and the favor of the Apostolic See, Bishop of Kingston.

To the Clergy and Laity of our Diocese, Health and Benediction in the Lord.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN :

The zeal and lively enthusiasm with which the faithful throughout this Diocese have proclaimed their attachment and fidelity to the Holy See, have been to us an abundant source of joy and consolation. In all the Missions meetings have been held, and everywhere the people have freely declared their love for the Holy Father and their devotion to the See of Rome. Let us return thanks to the God of mercies who draws good from evil, and who makes use of the wicked designs of perverse men to cause the faith of His Holy Church to burn more brightly in the hearts of Her children.

And indeed, Beloved Brethren, never in the history of the Church was there seen greater unanimity among her children ; never did there exist a closer union between the Pastor and the flock ; never did the Catholic body, spread as it is throughout the world, give a stronger proof, a more solemn declaration of their respect and deep veneration for the Chair of Peter ! What a delightful and at the same time what a consoling spectacle does not the Catholic universe present at the present moment to the christian mind ? Every where prayers are being offered up for the wants of the Church, and to obtain for the Holy Father the consolations he needs in the midst of so many trials. Every where the children of the Catholic Church express the feelings of indignation which fire their souls as they behold the impious, the sacriligious spoliations committed against the Patrimony of Saint Peter. And thus, by the permission of an all-ruling Providence, does it happen that the efforts of the enemies of the Church become vain, whilst their rage and hatred only serve to arouse the indifferent and the lukewarm ; and to fill the hearts of all true Catholics with feelings of love and reverence for the Church of God and Her Chief Pastor. Yes, Beloved Brethren, this sublime spectacle, of the whole Catholic world, giving expression to its feelings and rallying round the throne of its well beloved Pontiff, cannot but produce a happy effect. The voices of so many millions of faithful children protesting energetically against the iniquitous treatment to which their spiritual Father is subject, will ere long produce a salutary impression on those whose duty it is to protect the Church of God against all temporal enemies.

You will continue, dearly Beloved, to offer up prayers for the Holy Father, and to beg of God that He would console and assist him in the midst of his bitter afflictions. Do not for a moment cease to conjure heaven to shorten the time of trial and to quell the tempest which now rages round the Bark of Peter. But, beloved Brethren, whilst in obedience to the wishes of the Holy Father, you lift your hands in prayer, you must not forget that you have another duty to fulfil ; that it is in your power to prove in a tangible manner your love for the Church and its Head. Our Holy Father has been deprived of a considerable portion of his States ; his revenues which were before small, have been diminished, whilst the calls on his treasury have increased. In the midst of his wants to whom should he look for succour if not to his children. It is true he has not made any demand, but will we wait to be asked when we know that our Father is in want ? Will we not rather hasten to offer him a portion of our worldly substance, and thus show that our love does not consist in words alone, and that we will not remain satisfied with expressions of barren sympathy. Oh Beloved Brethren, what a happiness to be enabled to assist J. C. in the person of His Vicar ; what a source of joy to be allowed to offer a tribute to the spiritual Head of the Church ; what a consolation in after life to reflect that you contributed according to your means to support the Vicegerent of Christ on earth against the enemies of true religion.

Already in many countries the Catholics have sent their offerings to the Sovereign Pontiff. Among the first we behold poor Catholic Ireland—downtrodden, despised, persecuted, she has through ages of unhard of persecution preserved in all its lustre the priceless gem of divine faith ; and ever ready to contribute to the glory of God's Church, she sends to the Roman See, from her very necessities, sums which by their amount fill with surprise and astonishment even those who thought they knew best her generous heart. Oh let the noble example given by your brethren produce in you its full effect. Imitate their generosity as you share their faith in the Church and their love for their Supreme Pontiff. You will contribute to this the most laudable of all purposes, to maintain truth against error, Catholicity against heresy, innocence against guilt and iniquity, the cause of Christ and his Church against all the efforts of Satan. Can it be possible that any one calling himself a Catholic could be so dead to every noble and generous feeling as to refuse to contribute his mite ; on the contrary, filled with holy emulation will you not vie with one another to see who will contribute most in favor of this most sacred cause.

Do not allow the suggestions of worldly prudence to dry up the sources of christian charity. If it be true, as we cannot doubt, that he who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, how much more true must these words be when our offerings are made to the representative of Christ on earth. Come then, dearly Beloved, come and make your offering to the Holy Father. Whatever may be your position in life, rich or poor, come and give according to your means. Let none remain behind, however small may be your mite it will be acceptable in the eyes of that God who reads your hearts and who knows your dispositions. If God has given you an abundance of the things of this earth, give generously and God will reward your generosity. We ardently desire that all should share in this holy work, because we feel that it will draw down on all those who shall have contributed to it the most precious graces, the richest blessings of Heaven.

We have therefore decreed, and by these presents do decree as follows :

1st.—A collection shall be taken up in each Mission of this Diocese, to form a tribute to the Holy Father.

2nd.—The Reverend Pastor in each Mission will take such steps as he may deem best calculated to ensure the success of the collection.

3rd.—All the monies thus collected must be sent to us before the 15th July next.

This, our Pastoral letter, is to be read in all the Churches and Chapels of this Diocese, on the first Sunday after its reception.

Given at the Episcopal Palace at Kingston, under our signature and the seal of the Diocese, the fourth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and sixty.

† E. J. Bp. of Kingston.

(L.+S.)